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Tuesday, February 7, 2017 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

NICOLE KIDMAN'S $11 MILLION TELL-ALL

The actress to spill all her secrets in new autobiography. 10

First in a series: The Insomniac Files. 5

5 breakfast bowls for winter mornings. 13

UnacSEPTAble

Delays, crowded trains expected as transit system removes 40 cars for suspected flaws. 4

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EL FARO CONDITIONS PROBED IN FINAL HEARING

1 The U.S. investigation into the deadly sinking of a cargo ship during a 2015 hurricane entered its final hearing on Monday, with ship conditions probed at the start of two weeks of testimony set to examine new detail on El Faro's last hours. The Coast Guard's Marine Board of Investigation, convened only for the most serious accidents, is looking for evidence of negligence or misconduct in the worst disaster involving a U.S.-flagged vessel in more than three decades. All 33 crew onboard died when the 790-foot El Faro sank during a hurricane on Oct. 1, 2015, two days after leaving Jacksonville, Florida, on a cargo run to Puerto Rico. REUTERS

MAFIA INFORMANT LOSES LAWSUIT AGAINST FBI

2 A former mafia informant for the FBI who sued his handlers for arresting him in a murder case lost his case after a New York judge ruled there was not enough evidence that the agents had conspired to punish him by falsely charging him. Joseph Barone had sued over his 2009 arrest on what his lawsuit described as "trumped-up charges that he had participated in a murder-for-hire plot," in a case that offers a glimpse at the sometimes conflicted relationship between informants and their government handlers. A federal jury acquitted him in 2010 after he had spent 19 months in prison, much of it in solitary confinement. Barone, now 55, accused his handlers at the FBI of wanting to punish him for refusing an assignment to trick a gangster from the Gambino crime family into discussing criminal activity over the telephone. REUTERS

US SHOULD EXPAND MISSILE DEFENSE

3 The United States should expand its missile defense systems given missile testing by North Korea and Iran, the chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee said on Monday. The comments by Republican Representative Mac Thornberry followed new U.S. sanctions against Iran after the Persian country's recent ballistic missile test. The United States is also concerned

North Korea may be preparing to test a new ballistic missile. Thornberry's position was a sign of support in Congress for military spending to counter the threat from North Korea after U.S. President Donald Trump on the presidential campaign trail raised doubts about future spending to defend allies. REUTERS

IRANIAN ENGINEER RETURNS TO US AFTER SUSPENSION OF IMMIGRATION BAN

5 Iranian engineer Nazanin Zinouri, with her dog Dexter, gets a hug from Emma Porter after arriving at the Greenville Spartanburg Airport on Monday in Greenville, South Carolina. Zinouri, a Clemson graduate, works for a technology firm in Greenville and has lived in the United States for the last seven years. While attempting to return to South Carolina after a recent trip visiting family in Iran, she had been taken off her flight in Dubai as a result of the recent travel and immigration ban ordered by President Donald Trump. GETTY IMAGES

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

METEOR LIGHTS UP NIGHT SKY OVER MIDWEST

4 A meteor plummeted in a fireball over Lake Michigan early on Monday, lighting up the night sky in bright blue just before scattering over the lake in many pieces, according to a police video and an expert's description. Lisle, Illinois, police officer Jim Dexter recorded the meteor's descent on the dash camera of his patrol car at 1:25 a.m. Aside from Lisle, which is less than 30 miles east of Chicago, and other parts of Illinois; witnesses reported seeing the meteor from Wisconsin, Michigan and as far away as New York state and the Canadian province of Ontario, according to a description on the website of the American Meteor Society. The meteor's fiery descent is likely to rank as one of the most spectacular events of its kind anywhere in the world this year, Mike Hankey, operations manager for the society, said by phone. REUTERS

WELCOME TO METRO.US!

KATE MOONEY, FEATURES EDITOR

The polarizing talker of an HBO series about millennials in Brooklyn—yep, we're talking about "Girls"— kicks off its sixth and final season Sunday, Feb. 12. We spoke with actor Alex Karpovsky, who plays Ray Ploshansky, the moral center of sorts in a show of narcissists. "As I understood it, we never wanted to make a show about mature, balanced, healthy people," Karpovsky says.

metro.us/TV

PLAY TO WIN

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Every Monday, we pick a random winner from the participants who answered correctly one of the quizzes from the previous week. Congrats to last week's winner, **Mary Chapman from Philadelphia.**

metro.us/quiz

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SEPTA is running about 30 to 40 cars short of its Market-Frankford Line peak rush-hour fleet due to structural damage. FLICKR / CAMERA_OBSCURA

Delays expected as SEPTA removes 40 cars for inspection

The move was prompted after two of the cars were found to have cracks in the main support beam.

ALEXIS SACHDEV
@lexsachdev
alexis.sachdev@metro.us

More than 40 Market-Frankford Line cars were taken out of service this week for inspections, after two were found with a crack to the main support beam, SEPTA said Monday.

To offset the crush of Philadelphia rush-hour commuters, SEPTA will be supplementing the subway line with shuttle buses during morning and evening peak hours, the transit service announced on its website.

SEPTA said 144 cars are needed for those peak service times throughout the system. On Monday morning, SEPTA operated the line about 30 to 40 cars short of that number. Andrew Busch, a spokesman for SEPTA, told Metro that it's unclear how long these cars will remain out of service.

The entire fleet — about 220 cars — was built by the same company and delivered to SEPTA over a period of about two years, starting in 1997.

Busch said the transit authority is still unsure whether the cracks are a wear-and-tear issue or design flaw by the manufacturer, Germany's Adtranz (now Bombardier Transportation), but that will be apparent after further examination.

A crack in the main support beam could result in failure of the vehicle, Busch said, adding that routine inspections prevented that from happening. The other cars that were removed had displayed "similar characteristics," but did not have a crack in the beam, he said.

In July 2016, SEPTA pulled 120 Silverliner V cars — a third of the Regional Rail fleet — after the discovery of fatigue cracks from a faulty weld on the weight-bearing beams. Those cars were manufactured and repaired by Hyundai Rotem, which did not manufacture the Market-Frankford Line cars.

SODA FIGHT

36 Pennsylvania legislators are pushing back against soda tax

Three dozen Pennsylvania state representatives and five state senators are pushing back against Philadelphia's soda tax, saying it's unconstitutional and "will result in lost sales tax revenue."

Legislators filed a 64-page brief Monday, calling on the Commonwealth Court to overturn the 1.5-cents-per-ounce surcharge on soda and other sweetened beverages that went into effect on Jan. 1, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

According to the brief, the sweetened beverage tax violates the Sterling Act, which prohibits Philly from taxing items already taxed by the state, as well as the Uniformity Clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution by applying the tax "based on quantity or volume, not value, a set percent, or capped amount."

The city counters the brief parrots legal arguments previously made by the American Beverage Association — arguments that proved unsuccessful.

The bipartisan coalition of legislators across 28 counties, including Philadelphia, argue violations of the Sterling Act could negatively impact the state's budget, as well.

The city responded that such an assertion is unfounded.

"Our economist demonstrated that the PhillyBevTax would have little impact on state sales tax revenue and under certain circumstances could actually increase state sales tax revenue," said Lauren Hitt, the city's communications director.

ALEXIS SACHDEV

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OPINION

KIMBERLY M. AQUILINA
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Sleep can be an elusive mistress. She doesn't mean to be cruel and, when you can catch her, she's pretty great to hang around, provided you can convince her to stay.

However, my whole life has been one giant swipe left at the hand of this siren of sleep. This promise of sweet surrender.

I am always and forever on the quest of slaying my dragon with a pill, an herb, a tea, a yoga pose and a whiny whimper, "I just want to sleep!"

Since I was a child, I've had the hardest time sleeping and an even more mountainous task of waking up on time. At night, the rest of the house would be quiet, aside for some Venetian blind-lifting snores from my dad. Yet, I was up reading or lip syncing to the local radio's Hot Nine at Nine.

Night-Time-is-the-Right-Time Kim was so inconsiderate to Next-Morning Kim.

I would hear the alarm clock and my mom yelling that I was going to be late for school, but I would fall back asleep and dream that, dressed in my school uniform, I was sitting at the kitchen table. By the time I heard my mom's voice again, my sleep-muffled mouth would tell her, "I'm eating oatmeal," when I was still indeed, the queen of Pillow Village.

After sleeping through five alarm clocks, a coffee maker and a pissed-off roommate in college, countless medical tests and assurances from my family doctor that I was too young to be so tired, a former supervisor at my first job as a grownup suggested I get a sleep study.

After more tests and two sleep studies, with multiple probes stuck to my limbs and scalp while medical professionals watched me sleep via a camera in the room, we figured it out.

Turns out, my sleepy time schedule is so backward, the head of the sleep center at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland said he sees only one person like me a year. Ten percent of the world's population are night owls, so my great-great-great-great caveman granddaddy must've been the one to sit around and watch the campfire while the rest of the unibrowed grunters slept. (I also inherited his unibrow.)

With a graveyard shift and some carefully placed wax strips, problem solved, right?

But that minx of a mistress would still step away when I needed her most.

In this series, we aim to figure out life's grandest mystery: Why can't I sleep and how do I make myself just go to bed?

Desperate times have often called for desperate measures, but we'll take a look at some alternative (legal) methods of inducing Zs, so be sure to grab a Metro or go to Metro.us each week for the latest installment.

"In this series, we aim to figure out life's grandest mystery: Why can't I sleep and how do I make myself just go to bed?"

MIDDLE MARKET SPURS ECONOMIC GROWTH

PROVIDED

When you put the words "business" and "Greater Philadelphia" together in a sentence, people's minds will most likely conjure images of corporate giants that are headquartered in the region, such as Comcast in Center City, Amerisource-Bergen in Chesterbrook or DuPont in Wilmington, Delaware.

They might also think of the mom-and-pop businesses that line North 2nd Street in Northern Liberties. These are the kinds of companies that define Greater Philadelphia's diverse economy, but there is another, very important part of the economy that often gets overlooked.

Greater Philadelphia's middle-market companies — those with revenue between $10 million and $1 billion — are a large part of what drives growth in Greater Philadelphia's economy. They represent 27 percent of total regional employment, despite accounting for only about 1 percent of companies.

ROB WONDERLING

Rob Wonderling is president of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia. He can be contacted at http://chamberphl.com/about/the-president

A recent study by the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia explores the middle market's impact on the region's economy and examines the key findings that distinguish the potential for significant job growth middle market companies can create.

The report, "Mobilizing Greater Philadelphia's Middle Market," identifies six key themes that could encourage middle-market growth in the region: STEM and front-line talent, sustaining growth in closely held businesses, access to capital needed for growth, business climate, transportation infrastructure and industry hubs and startup pipeline.

Although middle market companies often go unnoticed, they have a combined revenue of more than $180 billion in Greater Philadelphia alone, and publicly traded middle-market companies in the 11 counties have outperformed their larger peers. These companies have revenue growth estimated at 4.8 percentage points higher than the national middle-market projection, but they will only achieve that only if they receive the support needed from state and local governments, colleges and universities, and economic-development organizations.

The report concludes that in order to increase high growth rates in Greater Philadelphia's economy, middle-market companies must be supported through:

- Education of middle-market executives on best practices for accessing capital and planning for transitions of leadership;
- Marketing the region to potential employees, entrepreneurs and investors, highlighting its relatively low cost of doing business, strong infrastructure, growing millennial population, proximity to metropolitan areas and strong presence of life-science companies;
- Communication of the needs of middle-market companies in areas such as infrastructure, industry hub development, and tax policy;
- Coordination of resources across middle-market companies and supporting organizations to provide services such as outreach to regional universities.

For information about the Middle Market Action Team visit metro.us

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Hundreds of free pre-K seats still empty

Mayor Jim Kenney at CORA Services Early Years at LaSalle University PROVIDED

By the numbers

2,000
FREE PHLPREK SEATS NOW AVAILABLE

500
SEATS STILL AVAILABLE

6,500
GOAL OF PHLPREK SEATS BY 2020

Philadelphia's long-awaited free pre-kindergarten program finally became a reality last month, but because the city is still trying to process the applicants, hundreds of open seats have not been filled.

Within four years, the city school system plans to create 6,500 "locally funded, quality pre-K seats" by partnering with neighborhood early education centers.

So far, 2,000 of those seats have been created, though 500 remain available, the Inquirer reported.

Demand is high for the remaining seats, but the city is still working to process applicants, who must meet specific income eligibility requirements.

The program is funded in part by the city's new tax on sweetened drinks.

The program, called PHLpreK, will also benefit from a $1.8 million research grant from the William Penn Foundation, announced on Monday.

For the first three years, the National Institute for Early Education Research will study and track how the program is being implemented to evaluate its impact "on children's learning and development," according to the grant announcement.

"The evidence demonstrates that providing access to high quality early childhood education is one of the most productive investments we can make," said Elliot Weinbaum, program director of the William Penn Foundation.

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Lawyer: US could grant final permit for Dakota pipeline as soon as Friday

Proponents believe the pipeline is necessary to transport U.S. oil safely and that it would create jobs.

The U.S. Army secretary could make a decision on the final permit needed to complete the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline as soon as Friday, the government's lawyer told a Washington, D.C., court on Monday.

The Army Corps of Engineers told the court it has submitted its recommendation to Robert Speer, the acting secretary of the Army, on whether it needs to complete a full environmental review before it can grant the final permit allowing work to start on a contested tunnel under a lake. The review was requested in December by former President Barack Obama.

Opponents argue that letting the pipeline cross under Lake Oahe, a reservoir that is the water source for the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, would damage sacred lands and could leak oil into the tribe's water supply.

Jan Hasselman, an attorney with Earthjustice, who represents the Standing Rock Sioux, said the tribe will challenge the U.S. government in court if the Army grants the easement. The tribe, along with other Native American groups, environmentalists and other activists, have opposed the $3.8 billion Dakota Access Pipeline led by Energy Transfer Partners LP.

He said it is unclear whether construction could begin while the decision is challenged or whether the court will grant an injunction blocking the work.

Standing Rock at the Oceti Sakowin Camp in North Dakota GETTY IMAGES

"Our position is the tribe's treaty rights and the law require the full [Environmental Impact Study] process that the government initiated in December. Issuing the easement without that process will be a serious violation of the law," Hasselman told Reuters.

A spokesman for the Army was not immediately available to comment. Energy Transfer Partners declined to comment on the legal proceedings. REUTERS

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US court to hear arguments Tuesday on Trump's travel ban

A U.S. federal appeals court will hear testimony on Tuesday over whether to restore President Donald Trump's temporary travel ban, the most controversial policy of his two-week old administration.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco on Monday asked lawyers for the states of Washington and Minnesota and the Justice Department to argue whether the ban should remain shelved. The court set oral argument for 3 p.m. PST on Tuesday.

A U.S. district judge in Seattle on Friday suspended Trump's order, opening a window for people from the affected countries to enter.

National security veterans, major U.S. technology companies and law enforcement officials from more than a dozen states backed a legal effort against the ban, that temporarily bars entry to the United States of people from seven Muslim-majority countries and halting the U.S. refugee program.

President Donald Trump GETTY IMAGES

In a brief filed on Monday, the Justice Department said U.S. District Judge James Robart's order on Friday was too broad and "at most" should be limited to people who were already granted entry to the country and were temporarily abroad, or to those who want to leave and return to the United States.

The new Republican president has said the travel measures are to protect the country against the threat of terrorism. Opponents say the 90-day ban is illegal, barring entry for citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen and imposing a 120-day halt to all refugees.

The case may ultimately reach the U.S. Supreme Court. REUTERS

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RACHAEL CLEMMONS

Jennifer Lopez posts cryptic Instagram note

Timing is everything. OK, that's not something I would normally say, but now that I've seen this on Jennifer Lopez's Instagram, I don't know, guys. I'm tempted to agree.

"Timing is everything. If it's meant to happen, it will, and for the right reasons," the post reads. What could this possibly mean?! Could it be a response to recent speculation about the pop star's definitely not fake relationship with Drake? According to Perez, Canada's finest rapper and "Degrassi" alum was recently spotted getting close with a retired porn star in Amsterdam last week, which, OK. But what does it mean?! I suppose we'll just have to wait and see. In the meantime, I encourage Jennifer Lopez to keep posting really thirsty pics on Instagram because, honestly, she looks great.

Scarlet Johansson on whitewashing in 'Ghost in a Shell'

The bombshell recently sat down with Marie Claire and discussed the controversy surrounding her role in "Ghost in a Shell," a film that many critics agree is another instance of Hollywood's classic tendency to whitewash nonwhite characters. Sigh. Not cute. And neither is her hedging the issue.

"I certainly would never presume to play another race of a person," the "Avengers" actress said. "Diversity is important in Hollywood, and I would never want to feel like I was playing a character that was offensive." OK, but no. It's not about playing an "offensive" character. It's about giving opportunities to people of color instead of having a white woman play the Asian lead in a film based on a manga. Of course, the issue is bigger than just Johansson — but still. At least it's a film with a definitive female lead, I'll give her that. So, yay?

Nicole Kidman to write explosive tell-all

Nicole Kidman is finally opening up. The 49-year-old is rumored to be working on a tell-all autobiography. And literally? My mouth is watering just thinking about all the goodies. According to Daily Mail, the "Lion" actress has maybe decided this is the time to lift the lid on her very guarded, very private life. And she could earn a cool $11 million for it which isn't too shabby either. Surely, Kidman will dish on her experiences with ex-husband Tom Cruise and the Church of Scientology, which she has never really gone public about — because her two children with Cruise, Connor and Isabella, are devoted followers of the cult, er, I mean, church. Other likely dishy topics include her now husband, Keith Urban, and his struggle with drugs; her maybe-torrid affairs with the likes of Ewan McGregor and Lenny Kravitz (girl, get it!); and maybe, hopefully, her decision to go blonde, even though we all know that the red hair looks so damn good on her. Don't fight it, Nicole!

Zayn Malik slams critics over anxiety

Zayn Malik has a message for all of his, um, haters. The singer and former One Direction boy bander took to Twitter over the weekend to remind everyone that he's here to stay. According to the Daily Mail, the singer has only sporadically appeared on stage, thanks to his struggle with anxiety, and was getting slack for it in the press.

"I recall someone saying to me a while back music wasn't my thing and maybe I should try something else," the 24-year-old tweeted after hearing the criticism. "I guess we're all good at doing things we shouldn't," he continued, with some festive emojis. I oscillate between being like, "Hey, why is this guy a thing," and, "This guy is mad talented, but I know way too much about his personal life considering I have never listened to any of his music." Regardless, anxiety is real. And illness should never get in the way of you pursuing your dreams. Anyone who says otherwise is ignorant AF, bye.

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FOR HER

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She'll love rocking one of these with her updo. Check out the sleek handmade Armour walnut hair pins at Moon + Arrow, starting at $42.
Moon + Arrow, 754 S. 4th St., (215) 469-1448, moonandarrow.com

Home is where the heart is

Handmade art is always a great gift. There are a few different styles, but this modern silhouette of Eirene, the personification of peace and beauty, will send her a message she'll love. Pick up one of these wood ornaments for $24.
Vagabond, 37 N. 3rd St., 267) 671-0737 vagabondboutique.com

Philly Love

It wouldn't be a Valentine's Day in the city without Marcie Turney's handmade chocolates at Verde. The iconic Love Statue is hand painted on a chocolate with Lancaster raspberry ganache. Build your own unique collection of four for $7.95.
Verde, 108 S. 13th St., (215) 546-8700 verdephiladelphia.com

FOR HIM

Give him your chocolate heart

It follows a Valentine's tradition in a very unconventional way. Pick one up at Mueller Chocolate in Reading Terminal Market for $19.50.
Mueller Chocolate, 45 N. 12th St. (267) 627-2613, muellerschocolate.com

Put a bird on it

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Long-life lingerie

How Madewell created the intimates collection you'll want to live in 24/7.

RACHEL RACZKA
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Madewell, who prides itself on creating the always-so-perfect staples for your capsule wardrobe, has branched into intimates, launching online and in stores today. The simple and comfort-focused bralettes and undies are your trusty answer to that first layer of the day.

The collection features soft-to-the-touch natural fabrics — pillowy brushed cotton and lighter-than-air lace and mesh — and classic, comfortable cuts that are both modest and modern. The 42-piece line is designed to be both weekend and workweek-friendly, in muted beige, stripes and classic white or black. Bonus: Most pieces are priced $12.50-$35, meaning they're made for wardrobe-building.

We chat with designer Joyce Lee about the enduring popularity of the bralette and how they incorporated Madewell's DNA into the line.

With the rise of the bralette, what did you do to make sure Madewell's version was extra-special?
We wanted to be sure that once a woman puts the bralettes from the collection on, she feels amazing. That meant that we needed to find the perfect fabric that had the right amount of softness, the perfect amount of stretch and recovery, and durability that could survive being worn under almost everything — and we hope, every day! We also looked to create simple and clean lines as well as subtle details to make sure the collection felt in line with our aesthetic and approach to dressing. Each fabric group has its own set of design elements that set them apart.

We've seen the recurring trend of women reaching for underwear that is comfortable and practical. But now, do you see women reaching for sexier or more chic options again?
We think there's a way to balance both — why can't it be comfortable, practical, simple, but still pretty and subtly sexy? That's what we hope is evoked from our line.

Are there any special fit details hidden within the pieces that you love?
The cotton group features convertible back straps and subtle stitching details. And we chose swan hooks and double-string straps for the lace group.

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MAKE HEALTHY YOUR NEW HAPPY

5 Healthy, hearty cereals to try this winter

Step up your cold-weather breakfast game.

KATE MOONEY
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There's nothing like a hot breakfast to start your winter morning. But a bowl of oatmeal gets boring real quick if you don't mix it up. Adding nuts, fruits and spices will pack in even more nutrition and freshen up with new flavors.

Plus, oatmeal isn't the only breakfast grain in the field. Polenta, quinoa and bulgur add the proof to your porridge.

Here are four hot cereal recipes — plus one for overnight oats — to make your winter mornings more nourishing.

Golden turmeric-flax breakfast polenta

Stephanie Clarke and Willow Jarosh of C&J Nutrition favor coarsely ground cornmeal. They sprinkle theirs with flaxseed for omega-3s, turmeric and cinnamon for antioxidants. Sauteed apples add sweetness and extra fiber. Protein-rich crumbled walnuts fill you up. Recipe at cjnutrition.com.

Jacked-up morning oats

Make your morning bowl go the extra mile by loading it up with good stuff. Instagrammer @veggininthecity makes hers with cashew milk, then tops with bananas, hemp seeds, frozen berries and cinnamon.

Overnight oats

The set-it-and-forget-it breakfast you can throw together the night before and then wake up and eat, overnight oats will revolutionize your mornings. Add milk or water, plus fixings, then cover and let sit in the refrigerator overnight. The Minimalist Baker prepares hers in a mason jar, mixing (gluten-free) rolled oats with almond milk, peanut butter, chia seeds, maple syrup, strawberries and bananas.

Slow-cooker oats

You'll want to use steel cut oats, (Irish oatmeal), and cook for seven to eight hours on low. Instagrammer @constancelyeating adds in bulgur wheat, a mineral-rich grain, to bulk up the porridge even more. Vanilla, cinnamon and raisins sweeten; she tops with almonds, blueberries and chia seeds.

Breakfast quinoa bowl

Quinoa bowls: not just for sad desk lunches anymore. Food blogger Jeanine Donofrio of Love & Lemons prepares a cinnamon quinoa breakfast bowl. Simmer two parts almond milk, one part quinoa with whole cinnamon sticks, then top with coconut flakes, peaches, raspberries and almonds.

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If ever again a critic like Meryl Streep wonders aloud why people love sports, just pop this one into replay. Because Super Bowl LI was everything that keeps us hooked as fans.

You may hate the Patriots — I do. But on Sunday, we watched the greatest game of all time, featuring the greatest comeback of all time (or choke, depending on your perspective). With the Falcons up, 28-3, midway through the third quarter, the somnambulant Pats suddenly awoke with strip-sacks, miracle catches and stroll-in two-point conversions. The only time they led was after the final play of overtime.

As in every great game, there was much to debate. Why didn't Atlanta OC Kyle Shanahan milk the clock? How does Matt Ryan allow himself to take that disastrous sack? One minute the Falcons were dining on lobster tail, and the next they collectively stuck their fingers down their own throats and gagged to death.

Of course, we shouldn't be shocked. The answer to all is Tom Freakin' Brady.

There's no longer debate over the best player of all time. In the macro sense, Brady is the only QB with five Super Bowl rings and four Super Bowl MVPs. His 43 completions and 466 passing yards Sunday are both Super Bowl records.

In the micro sense, was anyone really shocked by the comeback? The 25-point deficit was there merely to set up Tom Terrific for the moment. The "Julian Edelman Catch" now tops David Tyree's "Helmet Catch" as the all-time Super Bowl play. The game-tying TD with 57 seconds left; the calm, surgical overtime march to victory … it's all there just to add another chapter to the legacy.

Tom Brady probably silenced a great many naysayers Sunday night, earning his fourth Super Bowl MVP. GETTY IMAGES

You can cling to Deflategate or Evil Belichick's spy capers or whatever other nefarious Pats scandals you like. They occurred. But if you're still arguing about who the best-ever is, you're ignoring reality. As Kobe Bryant tweeted Sunday night, "Five rings can't be deflated." And you should assume Brady will come back next year at age 40 and win it again.

This season, Brady threw spirals with that 50-pound chip on his shoulder, placed there by Roger Goodell. The Pats lost their first-round pick and Brady had to sit four games because the commissioner felt the need to turn the football equivalent of a speeding ticket into (literally) a federal case.

So you figure the last thing Goodell wanted Sunday night was to hand the Lombardi Trophy to that franchise. But consider this: 2016 may have been the NFL's worst season, dogged by falling TV ratings, national anthem polemics, concussion fallout and an otherwise dreary postseason. A blowout Super Bowl only would have fueled discussion of how the league is in decline.

Brady ended all that. The comeback now becomes the conversation. We'll spend months regaling the drama and brilliance that occurred Sunday night. The fantastic finish gives the 2016 season a positive identity that pushes Colin Kaepernick and every other headache into the closet.

Tom Brady is so amazing that he may even save Roger Goodell from himself.

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Hart, seniors bid farewell to WFC

The Josh Hart farewell tour continues as March approaches. GETTY IMAGES

The finality, the reality of it all didn't hit Josh Hart right away.

Villanova had just finished putting away stubborn St. John's 92-79 late Saturday night when it was pointed out to the Wildcats' best player, senior co-captain and candidate for NCAA Player of the Year he has just played his last game in the Wells Fargo Center, their South Philadelphia home away from home.

"I didn't realize it was my last one here," admitted Hart, who scored 25 points and pulled down nine rebounds, as the 22-2 Wildcats led wire-to-wire over the Red Storm. "It went by quick. To be able to play in arena like this always is amazing, especially the way our fans come out each game, no matter the opponent. It's a blessing playing here. I'm gonna miss it."

The more Hart thought about it the more in began to sink in. The next time he plays in the building will presumably be for an NBA team, perhaps even the Sixers. But it won't be the same.

"I'm getting goose bumps even thinking it's my last one playing here with this team," he said. "I'm gonna miss it dearly."

Hart got a clue what he was in for even before he'd committed to play for Jay Wright and Co.

"I saw the Syracuse upset game when [Ryan Arcidiacono] hit a three to tie it," recalled Hart of Nova's 75-71 OT win over No. 3 Syracuse in 2013. "And I saw a Georgetown game that year. I'd committed by that point. It's a pro arena. I love the Pavilion, but it's always great coming here."

Speaking of the Pavilion, the second-ranked Cats will be back there Tuesday to take on none other than Georgetown before heading out on a three-game road swing to Xavier, DePaul and Seton Hall.

There's still more than a month to go before they finally get the chance to defend their title, which one player from Nova's other championship team believes could happen.

"We won it with six guys," said Dwayne McClain, one of the stars from Rollie Massimino's 1985 squad. "You just want guys to be healthy at the right time. We waited 31 years to share that glory. I wish it could've happened earlier, but they could be in position to do it again this year."

The likelihood is Nova will start its run in Buffalo, before taking the act to Broadway, site of the East Regionals. Of course last year the East went through the WFC, only Villanova wasn't invited, which didn't turn out so bad.

"Yeah we were bummed out," admitted Hart. "We had a chance to play in Philly for the Elite 8. That would've been amazing. It would've basically been a home game. But we definitely managed to overcome it."

To do so again, though, they just won't be able to go to the Wells anymore.

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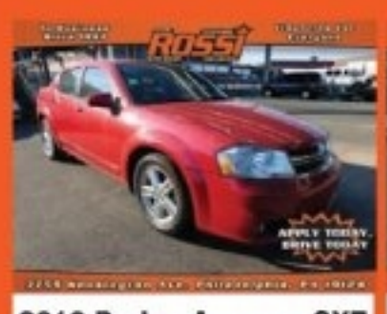
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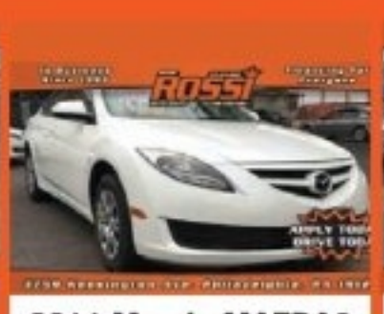
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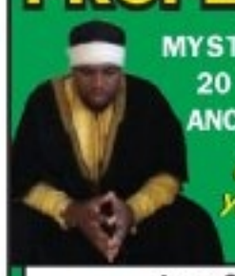

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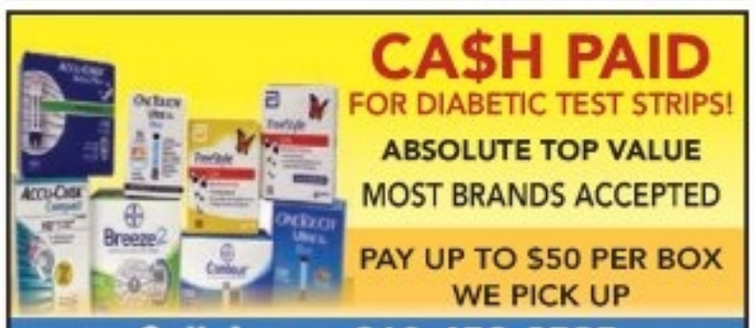

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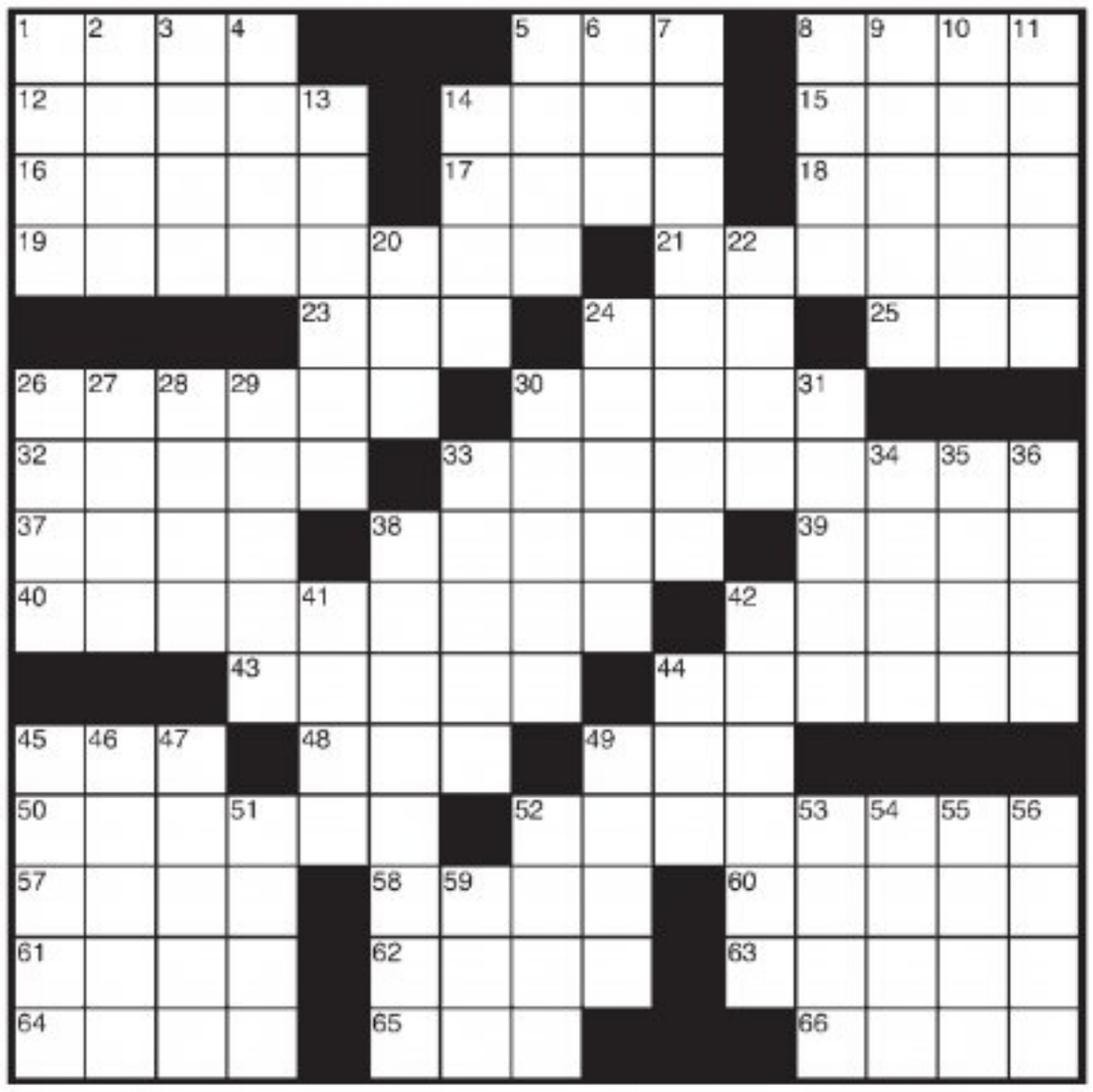

Across

1 Anchor's place
5 Low-lying clouds
8 Perfume bottle
12 Campfire remains
14 Adventurer, often
15 Earthen jar
16 New Orleans gridder
17 Familiar auth.
18 Roman historian
19 Indulging
21 Necessarily involve
23 At our wit's --
24 -- Paulo, Brazil
25 Forensic science tool
26 Arcade classic (hyph.)
30 Kind of knife
32 Cube inventor
33 Make easier to swallow
37 Byron's works
38 "-- and Bess"
39 A single time
40 Almost
42 "Captain Blood" lead
43 Nozzle choice
44 Karen -- (Isak Dinesen)
45 Plea at sea
48 Boathouse gear
49 "Snow" veggie
50 Dilate
52 Cockpit reading
57 Muddy
58 The lowdown
60 Like a tablet
61 -- fixe
62 Usher's quest
63 Four-door model
64 Uses rods and cones
65 Corn serving
66 Lobby furnishing

Down

1 Pinch of salt
2 Hairy twin
3 Thin wedge
4 Vegas game
5 -- shui
6 Juan's gold
7 Taken off (2 wds.)
8 Battery word
9 Old war story
10 Lead Chipmunk
11 Clapton hit tune
13 Talk a blue --
14 "The Mummy's --"
20 Quaint lodging
22 Roulette color
24 Waterlogged
26 Ont. or Que.
27 BMW rival
28 Driver with a handle
29 Refreshes the fern
30 Muscular
31 Rod-shaped bacteria (2 wds.)
33 Kind of energy
34 Black gemstone
35 Teen bane
36 Dollywood loc.
38 Idyllic place
41 Fairy-tale word
42 Thrashes about
44 Make a wager
45 Freight haulers
46 Water or rust
47 Shopping --
49 Conspiracy
51 Skippers' OKs
52 Nowhere near
53 Men's furnishings
54 Disentangle
55 Like Beethoven
56 Ferber or Millay
59 PBS funder

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easy

	4	7		5		9	6	
		2			4	8		
	6					7		
			9		1			3
4		3		8		1		2
8			3		7			
		5					1	
		9	8			2		
	2	4		6		3	5	

hard

				4				
	4		8	6		9	7	1
6	8	9				4		
	6				5	3		2
				8				
7		4	6				8	
		6				7	1	3
9	1	7		5	6		2	
				1				

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries When faced with adversity, you must show compassion and a willingness to find solutions. Turn any negative you encounter into a positive.

Taurus Show compassion and offer help. Get involved in your community or take part in an event that will have a positive impact on something you believe in.

Gemini Sticking to the truth will help you avoid mistakes. If you want something, you must ask for it. Don't take what others say to heart. Make changes based on your findings.

Cancer Channel your emotional energy into something constructive. Personal alterations that add to your comfort or contribute to your happiness are highlighted.

Leo Making travel plans, taking business trips, attending conferences or just doing something that will update your image or boost your morale would all be good ideas.

Virgo Do what you can to assist those in need, but not at the expense of your own needs. Problems with medical issues and settlements will surface if you aren't careful.

Libra Not everyone will be happy with the decisions you make. Consider your choices and adjust your schedule to ensure that you take care of your responsibilities.

Scorpio Home is where you will feel most comfortable. Take on a task that will challenge you mentally and encourage you to make positive changes at the same time.

Sagittarius Make a physical change that will boost your confidence. Setting a trend or expressing how you feel in the way you present yourself will attract positive attention.

Capricorn Question anyone you don't trust or who you feel may not have accurate information. Look out for your interests and don't rule out taking an unusual route.

Aquarius Make your decisions based on your needs, not on what someone else expects of you or is trying to manipulate you into doing. Stay focused and do your thing.

Pisces Look past what's right in front of you. If you delve into the unfamiliar, you'll come up with unique ideas that will help you create a better atmosphere. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

T	R	U	C	E	■	B	S	M	T	■	A	B	E	L
E	A	T	I	N	■	A	H	S	O	■	S	A	R	I
E	M	I	T	S	■	T	O	T	O	■	S	R	A	S
S	P	L	E	N	D	I	D	■	■	B	I	O	T	A
■	■	■	A	O	K	■	C	H	A	S	M	■	■	■
A	S	S	E	R	T	■	T	O	A	D	I	E	D	■
P	I	Q	U	E	■	A	W	A	K	E	■	T	O	E
S	L	U	R	■	E	R	A	S	E	■	A	R	N	E
E	T	E	■	E	V	E	N	T	■	O	N	I	O	N
■	S	A	P	L	I	N	G	■	O	U	T	C	R	Y
■	■	K	U	B	L	A	■	L	E	S	■	■	■	■
O	P	E	R	A	■	■	A	I	R	T	I	G	H	T
R	E	D	S	■	U	L	N	A	■	E	R	R	O	R
B	A	B	E	■	F	A	I	R	■	R	A	I	S	E
S	K	Y	S	■	O	W	L	S	■	S	E	N	S	E

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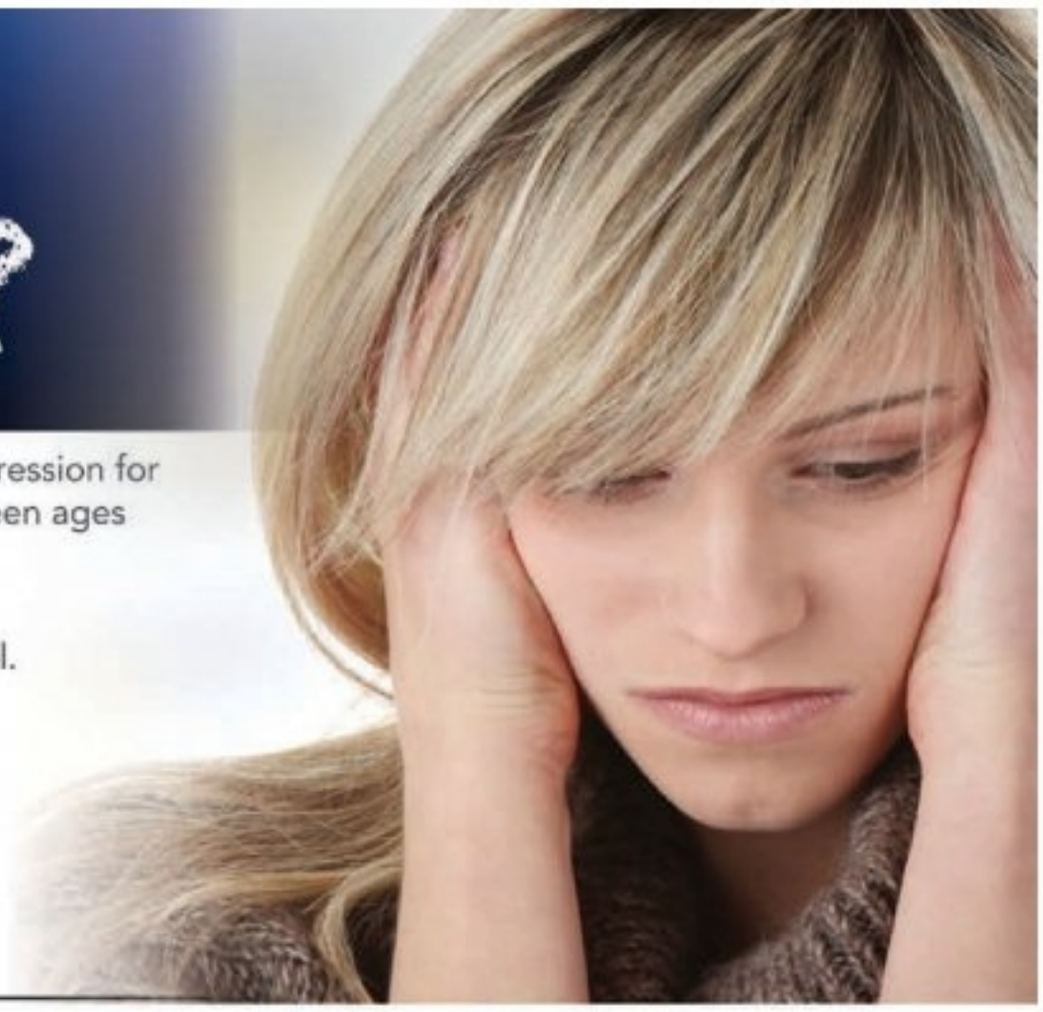

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